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A Hole Cut Out from the World

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Bard

A Hole Cut Out from the World

Senior Project submitted to

The Division of Languages and Literature

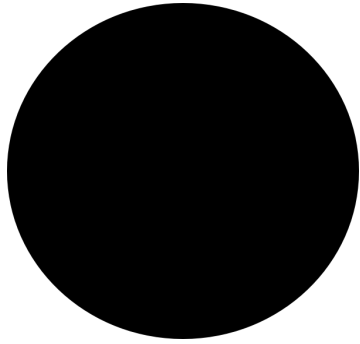
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by

Marita Dancy

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2017



A HOLE CUT OUT
FROM THE WORLD

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AFTERIMAGES

AWAKE IN BED

Coming so far,
she did not know where West ended,
but figured West merely a sign
for a 1938 Beetle
and her father's stamp collection.

Her first day East
spent on bed reading and
waiting — the phone rings.

The therapist wants her \$.
Could the call be a metaphor for loneliness?

A city stewing outside and blindly
waiting.

The cats will not go down some stairs
shouting to her.
I need you to do this for me, she says, I need peace,
You're an addict, they mew,
Your words don't give.

For dinner the fridge provides
chocolate cake & rosé.
She accepts this as a metaphor
for unplanned and unpaid vacations.
She eats in bed.

Pleasure in remembering— back seats
and canasta games—
where she had been before
the city
wakes her.

Instead of writing her novel
She sends texts West...

The book I'm reading reminds me of you.

Are you driving?

I could use something.

AISLES

The world attacks me in my sleep.

The world tracks me

to bed with trails of tongues,
words which can only be sound.

I don't want to admit:

I am saying yes

as a way to say
anything.

Am I so bothered

by consequence that I refuse
to say no?

At the end of the aisle,

I reach the meat turn,
 & walk horizontally.

A continued draw

into the non-consciousness

of being nobody

who does nothing.

Ostensibly enveloped

within the dirge

of wallowing

unknowing and unfeeling.

Attacking in my sleep,
the world drags me into dreams
by the gestures of strangers I have just met.

These “dead” men are so free,
& I am enslaved: living
when a woman can laugh,
but can never refuse a joke.

A man is a sign heard and
drawn near
to my cherishing heart.

How can I know
paths leading home are wed
to trees and taken from me?

I know only those whom I love,
the rest is hindrance.

DREAM FOR MY SISTERS

In trying
to say
suddenly,
what happened,
I would not have you lie.

Sadness does not end,
but carries death on.
I pass nights foreseeing
terrible events
suddenly.

In waking
how to call out your names?
See
your faces among blushing leaves.
Hear the toll,
and its prickling
desert arms lithe in love's
embrace.

How
to get by on tissue talk,
or pretend
a life upon moments
of sky?

A SMALL LOSS

The cord crawls from backyard to television set;
mating snakes dancing within brambles
before entering a mouse hole.
Barely detectable details.

She won't suffer habits of repurposed furniture.
Crooking her neck— a roost
created change and continuum
under the same sill.

It turns out three-legged chairs
useless unless an artist perched,
unless an eye greets the chair in the foyer,
placed his non-sensibility.
The old bureau now an altar to no one's surprise,
but no one prayed either.

Only
under the non-thought of her sleeping pills,
could she acknowledge the voices of the repurposed furniture.

where did You put the radio?

We haven't used that in years,

Honey.

Looking out from bed,
crying over her thriftiness to create a bag out of his pants...

there was no difference.

where is the radio? he asks.

I threw it out.

THE MIND IS A WOUND

for Ryōkan

The mind is a wound. Time enters
as dream pictures at midnight.

Days resemble the distance
between fallen branches
telling me of the greatest mountains
ground to sand by flowing water
wishing to be somewhere else.

I let my tears dry
to avoid becoming
dust beneath moonlight solace.

NIGHTMARE

Upon waking in a nightmare— I am shouting,

Where are you? Until I see,

then I squeeze it so tight,

I squeeze.

Where are you? I am sleeping—

I wonder how people ever stop

thinking, how people stop at all.

Searching with my eyes

closed, I see what is no one's

& I squeeze so tight.

The past billows over my mind.

Window blinds— I wonder

how to forgive the time of day

for being dusk.

Where are you?

Attempt to drape the pain with blue

which was missing, and dearly

along with a velcro digital watch

no one had seen in years.

I only knew that it happened,

whether one wanted it or not.

This, all I could know.

Eyes shut, red

is not kind.

Where are you?

You are much older now,

I squeeze his hand so tight. I know

when his blood becomes mine it is not seen.

I wonder does blood belong to you

after its bled, and dearly

does it belong to me. I squeeze his hand

So tight—

it is only no one's time. I wonder

does a brain bleed at dusk and become a dream because it wants to.

DEAR MOLIMO,

The moon is a well where the light of my day interns,
 a hole full of water wept.

The moon is your cupped palms awaiting prayer,
 your vacuumed eyes stealing being.

No the moon is my image kept,
 a transcript of words spoken only between us.

The moon a vehicle for the emptiness of now,
 our love which is real
 and a sign.

On nights when the moon does not reach my sky,
 she wails in the broken chamber of my anahata:
 a drooling, green, overwrought orb.
On these nights my body stinks of you:
the weight of salt water unto me,
 without the sagging pockets
 underpinning your eyes
 and the moon.

LOVE,
m

BLUE MAY

for Joan Didion

Everyone crossed the glass threshold of the new hospital before the end. It couldn't be called a procession because there were no lines— except along each plane of his white room. 1st plane, 2nd plane. ODJ548. *If I can walk I can go home.* These lines stretched through the window and across the Tobin Bridge so that he might wonder.

We stood on the boundary with our toes curled over the edge like so many women facing the pavement. Could incandescence really make all of us glow? Did lights ever reach the travellers arriving at the same destination day after day, or explain the pain extended and stalled? *They've been writing about the same thing for years*, he warned us. The problem being there was so much written down. So much held down to the page. The ocean was the only way out from under the bridge.

The lines reaching for his face were like sweetwater river beds. She waited on the edge because the only roads led to the bridge and to here, and yet her sister was at home cleaning the doorknobs and the light switches. Her curled toes congealed to the edge as though they were not bridge stone.

AFTERIMAGES

8:27 am

A white elephant seen walking is a good omen. This happens when you say “gee” in the middle of saying “cheese” behind a green couch with a cushion missing half its clothes. The wood bruises your bone when you’re caught between it and the man. He is pushing you closer to precariousness, but won’t let go. He is in love with indulgence because he knows how to bury a body once it’s been burned. The photograph of the elephant does not get burned. This is never an omen.

4:54 am

ok

enough,

stop?

Today

ok?

stop

nothing?

it?

9:33 am

She wanes on a whim. The mouth operates from the inside, but stays closed. Were all children so mean to their mothers? She calls it the "New Paradigm." It started with the world and got bigger, which was just the way her mom had done it, and her mom before her. It was impossible to tape screaming lips shut, but of course this was something "new." The liberals are calling it the eighth wonder. How many women could thank their husbands while their mother was ashamed of them and how many fingers did they have? New administration taking over with shut mouths only widen the eyes. Marie was not convinced.

7:05 am

Circles come right out of the ground. Drowning was probably a good thing. The coyotes would have been on them in no time. His tines went up on the inside of their beams and locked them all three together.

11:14 am

*I see vials of sands. Her refusal to
abscind. A red dress. And I expected
answers today... my unexplained days,
my uninterpreted dreams, my
many questions about repetition. The
sands were not the same although all
laid out. Her dress pointed to the sand,
it illuminated the window... her dress is
made of blood. Failed machinery sitting
unable to move. A lie... the dress is
made of chintz. It points to blood. The
window is closed.*

10:02 am

*She, a fancy lawyer who dictated.
Tapering along the edges of a secret—
crying out— dictating the message.
Words, she knew, but how? Is it
possible to have nothing to say? Could
she, a fancy lawyer, become a mute—
yes. Yes, a mute, and a fancy one at
that. Quit the crying act. Go home.*

3:47 am

I'm

the I

let on

chipped away

can't

can't

happened

bleed

are you ok?

Ok.

all

can't

broken

All

more blood?

months

entire days

last

illuminating

patiently

WORDS FROM DREAMS

A MOMENT OF MEMORY

Serene she sleeps a thousand nights
without a dream to wake her.

A state between sadness and despair
is nothing but a dream-thought of a day
she will not recall for three more years.
Quiet secrets of which her name was one.

A clean mouth is silent when she speaks.
Drowning out and with the water
of an oblivious bed stand, she
inherits another small lie.

THE AUTHENTICATION OF A DREAM

At the shore of your eye,

I see a battered

sweater

stirring the waters.

Are you freer now,

than then?

Where you laid your eyes closed,

not listening...

The familiar red thread kept together within a cold

green halo of northern sea,

before utterly

unraveling.

Your ocean eyes return—

the shoreline gone as you wave,

drifting debris

appears far off.

UNWAVERING

for Elaine Scarry

The blue light is remembered
for being there, and not
being since.

Everything had to be imagined now—
a psychic sky relieves old days
of obliviousness and peace.

Take care and enjoy the new friends you are making...

I will see you all soon...

If he is going to arrive, I expect
to see him after the corner.

Standing in the kitchen, I wait
to see him in his blue chair.
To see him leaving her bedroom
through a reflection of the oven door.
See him, no,
be him before the sink
before the window.
Be him before the stove and be me looking.

But I am no longer standing—
sitting left and diagonal

to see him always before
the window, eating.
To hear the knife, or just its edge,
before a laugh.

Love,
Molimo

It can be a mistake to imagine all of this,
while
between his blue chair and the glass door.
Wavering undoes standing, so convinced am I,
I am wrong.
Never saw nor see balance within a door,
so cry.

Pretend or plunge
to see him, knowing only
standing before motions of ghosts
not arriving.

Molimo intentionally tapped his left foot today...

(bearing years of living silence)

The seemingly problem
of his
I love you,
without his knowing.

Could a drive relieve broken memories of beautiful daughters?

Without his knowing,
could everything be imagined now—
the color of the sky told us a time
of blood spilled and fleeing.
Somewhere something remained so blue.

WITHOUT WORDS

for William Faulkner

He said he knew without the words,

Language determines. Preceding and proper as pa's 'no'. A swift scythe
knowing the wheat fully grown and ready for harvest.

he told me that pa is going to die without words,

She knows something which she does not say. It has no sound which can be
translated by voice. There would be no symbol, she knew, besides this. This
knowing.

I knew he knew because if he had said he knew with the words...

She arose from this 'loss of words'. Silence being that it always said more—
the words having only history. Nothing now, but her.

I would not have believed that he had been there and saw us.

Seeing the future as lightning comes without its sound. The Real and the
Trauma and the Neglect! The hairs on his head stuck up where he lay— she
knew words she dare not say.

*And I said "Are you going to tell pa a —m?" without the words,
and he said "Why?" without the words.*

FORMERLY KNOWN

attended participated graduating
had met and loved
being

sharing
was born
was preceded loving
be made
passed away
is survived
See

passed
away

born
was

was
enjoyed
and being wade
had achieved
he had
his own

was
attended loved leaves
heartbroken

if you are fighting
or have
please get

sorry offends hurts
shames hope

save experiencing
help open have

featured giving
was harnessed
cultivated dropping
claiming
distorted

was explored
that with his father
taught

would go on
never released

included building
combing committed recognised
played shun
changed his name
remained unheard

enduring came
be sent to Rage—
love
will be
best remembered
will be
lovingly remembered
survived
passed away

attended graduated employed
passed away
will always be remembered
for her
made
including experimenting
she fought
had experienced truly

loved tried she

struggled

has been

was born

survived

if you have fighting

asks do to be

and guide

VESSELLING

Upon unrealized fragility,
she widens.

Her mind, her
flesh, her heart
prevailing precarious positions,
not unlike glass jars
of Hampton Beach
on a sill.

She amounted to this risk—
an emptiness vast enough to contain
only detritus.

Ashes shook within its glass eye,
still she mourned now,

grieved being, its small
mess of things.

The half-sooted
fireplace, his fraying

War and Peace,
the backside scribbles,
her collection of lost pen caps
he always adored...

BEAR WALKING INTO SHADE

Days followed by
yogurt stains followed by
baseball games followed by
carpool lanes followed by
leg aches & coffee sips, rooms
of unlabeled doors.

Only one blueberry bush remains.
Molimo stands guard— he is missing
 someone or
 something.
He expects someone to know. He
 needs this.

For long hours he looks to
 his own face on the mantle,
 shrugging year and
circumstance.
Does a man keep his name once he's lost
 it; can he make a sign
 without one? Without *xoxo*?

Neck bent up to absent hemlocks, he remembers little children
 running in and out of shadows.
How does his mind become a phantom limb?
If a man stays put, he will find it

harder to lose things.

If a man stays put....

Under early darkness Molimo

 furious and won't stay where there is nothing of him.

 Why was he left

in a strange house with a stranger's key?

A man is never lost at sea.

Then how is a mind made phantom?

He doesn't notice hunger but fills the hole of his stomach repeatedly

 leaning against the sink with windows of hemlocks to watch.

The sink gives.

His hole escapes him

 and you know

(the hemlocks are gone).

INTERRUPTED BY JOY

for Leslie Scalapino and Lyn Hejinian (I desire to see being remembered as having seen,)

She remembers being as having
silence interrupted by signs.

Pride made her
inconsolable—
something she knew already,
but had no sight of.

To cry— a discovery
of feet in the sand
of a beach hoarded by gulls...

Her being
letting out a certain power—
the tears were a livelihood
upon her silent involvement
in entropy.

She remembers being having
certain hands and feet and certain toes:
reading emotions in a palm
as a threshold for seeing,
making deals wherein
the eyes are dry.

Without a body, the world is silent.

The wetness arises from a gaping hole.

She is found by him
and he presses his palm wounds
against her wings to avoid saltwater
being. She
remembers being
loveliness,
as holes dug for him,
and turns her body slightly forward.

Saltwater bruises dwelling
within her own hands
as she kneels alongside the watering pit.
With his hands he brushes
and smooths dirt into the hole.

Now she is dry.
Her silence discovers
a desert— immediate
evaporation of an ideal.
Despite the sting left on her skin,
he holds her in her arid gaze,
brushing her breast with
shredded palms
and she remembers
having seen
being.

SHE COULDN'T HELP BEING REMEMBERED FOR HER LOOKS

for Trump (locker room talk)

Could you
forget whiteness?

Or skinny jeans from
American Eagle,
could you forget those?

Can you remember without them?

Could you forget a pulsing sunburn
and dark holes of Ray-bans,
and sweet sixteens and Daddy's paycheck
and acres of land out West?

You could forget the white skin
of your Mommy's breast,
but not yours
and not Mary's.

Could you forget your own
and East from West
and apocryphal innocence?

How about seafoam:
could you forget

someone else's tears
while holding their hand?

Would I convert you
to blindness?
Convince you
of the opacity in all skin,
its surface
scabbed and smooth
without Victoria's Secret, and without
Daddy's.

THE FULFILLMENT OF WISHES IN DREAMS

“... . In the room
left by her, he
cannot see himself

as in a mirror, as
a feeling of reflection.
He thinks he thinks,

of something else.”

-Robert Creeley

A walk would be nice, you said, starting off,
leaving the rest in bed.

The meadow had grown over
to preserve a dead elephant—
the little left of the world.

You always wanted the pronominal moment
to end, you said,
so I admitted, finally,
to wanting to be more than one.

After years of dismissing bones
for photographs kept under the bed,

I tried growing myself
over you, by telling you
to lie perfectly still
while spreading my arms for the wind to stretch.

If I told myself you were lying
there, underneath the bed,
could I find your bones?

Or would I miss the photographs,
which did not belong
on the wall and did not belong under the bed?

I wanted the photographs to grow
over my eyes.

Back in the meadow, you said you were *tired of lying*
still on the ground.

I am not finished, I said.

You breathed slowly, turning your head—
my fingers remain the same lengths.

Growing takes years, you said,
but you are wrong— the wind swells as we speak—
growing impatience
incites me to dreams of rock being
bones which do not disintegrate
when touched.

Am I still making sense?
I want you. A waxing moon appears to be falling
out of its pants
while hanging low late

into dawn. Something is not beautiful
when seen by everybody, yet I
long for naked being
light on my skin.

You disagreed with, *look at me*. Slowly,
I must lift my budding body to exhume
you from the meadow. I pry the lids
for the glass hiding there
to see myself squinting in
the room of your eye.

I do not know if you are more or less
indelible in this moment
for I know that by opening eyes I will call all
of this a dream.

SOMNAMBULIST

Your lack of body is breathing
freely and stop.

World peers over my shoulder while you
are nothing, but
blueness occurring at 8:16
and sleeplessness.

By dark devotion, your realness protrudes:
stark against walls of my imagined home,
an appendage for reaching between skulls.

In lull of aloneness
when eyes shut worlds away,
I push towards knowing.

Wavering
through painted fantasies to find you
within the constellation of neurons;
I move along fences.

TOUCH

for Paul Eluard

(Mes caresses fondaient mes rêves en un seul clairvoyant et aveugle un rêve du duree.)

In our meager bed,
every sense is lost but touch,
the sheer of your palm
against my back.
The softness between two unattended
lovers— ferns
without eyes, I see you
are not a fish, but a man collecting
promises along my profile.

It is the same touch
expanding my mind to the gore of words,
the *talk* of roasting a shoulder.
Who could eat their lover?
Should I dine between your bones
while you portrait my thighs
with your hands?
Should I turn you to meat
in my mouth as you wash me
into an image...

In my mind, you too,
petting hands, molded and kept
since the night of liberation.

The hotel room on the 29th floor
makes finger promises
to devour the beauty of
the form and the formless.

Where
else did hands make these things?
Away from eyes away off.

A WAKE WITHOUT WARNING

for Gertrude Stein

A rose is a rose is a rose is a

morning.

Skin as white as bone as dead as you.

I dreamed myself as dead as you.

It is February—

a wake when I thought

the grass as dead as you.

Asleep as flowers in their beds,

I dreamed of a dying day, its colors

bled as you— the sky

as dead as you

which is not so dead

when thought about

and less so when dreamed.

A rose is a mourning. Sky

as bare as blue as you.

I dreamed myself slid

into glass and

kept.

I dreamed you as summer wades

as shells left as crests met.

What is not an end? What is

not a rose?

EFFORTS OF THE TRANSMISSIBLE

for Jacques Lacan (I am not a poet, but a poem)

A man reads by having his eyes read for him.

The words are no one's— pages carry
traces of a sound perpetuated.

A man makes signs by remembering another voice,
or another man revives a certain knowledge for him,
not a word, not Molimo.

She creates a gesture
to mean she's all there, just her lips
won't move, her hands neither.

Expressionless,
except her effort alone
says something
her body would not.

A series of deliberate winks reminds someone to feed her.

We knew it was a shame, but whose?
Between the word and the thing there were inadequacies;
there was sickness
and death.

And our bodies
belonged to no one— they suggested something,
recollected another name.

Her mind maintained through its own cunning
what her body could not.

His hands and mouth move to mean
he's all there, just his words
won't sense, his eyes neither.
Our talk reminds him of
something to count, or to hum.
His nonsense said what words would not—
something which they veiled.
It was despite words that we understood,
despite a body that we recognized
someone there.

So how does a man say *it*?
When lips and hands fail and
language betrays,
his eyes make a sign
which cannot be a word.
His gaze transmits
something he can never say,
something only dreams echo.

THE LOST TEMPLE

for Ashbery (There is nothing to do for our liberation, except wait in the horror of it.)

We cut across the country to some prescribed notion you had
about the current state of farms.

Did anyone name their chickens?

Could the horizon be seen from his penthouse?

Roses not rising, only secured tight
on leather seats.

You wishing it was not a two week trip
and without knowing the wear....

Is the car stronger than us
if it dies sooner? Burns enough fuel?

We saw signs for the temple
and leverage... You said something about the state
of oranges in Texas? Florida?

Could we have sex
in the car under the sign? There were limits
to the little things
we could say
and with only words to choose from.

*Remember the sabbath day
to keep it holy...*

I wondered
if the temple could be relieved by a sign—
the form of one,

its words were condensation
and the water altered the shape of the fruit.
Could a rose survive
from LA to DC?

Did anyone still read poetry?

I've asked every gas station attendant since Oklahoma City,
and he hands me a Cobra lighter,
says *have a good day now*. He means
I'm asking the wrong question.
Does beauty need a gun for protection?

There were no temples north of Virginia,
no Waffle House past Pennsylvania. You said
something about the state of not being
when you are asleep.
Could you guard a rose while napping under the moon?

I looked at him beyond the little reflection
of car buttons,
the elms, and the wisping clouds.
Why was I alive, and why not
twenty years older? Didn't I deserve
to know what my father thought of poetry?
But lines had to be drawn...

Δ

After all, is a rose so weak that she allows thoughts to wilt her?
A hole is just a hole.

But it was the sight of it
which wore on me— shapelessness
with a name
and the skin stretching where it would scab properly.

Yet, there is something lovely about the hour it took
to find the bike shop he had been
'a hundred times' before.

A maplessness,
a lack of signs to and from the past or
the uncovering of some treasure
every time a name was spoken.

He defied emptiness as ashes do.

A beautiful urn with nothing inside
is a hole cut out from the world.

Do we call this a temple?

A man may reach a hole which erases him.
He may only know what he sees, understanding
what little is answered without words... a tune
or a rose.

Does a man whose only possession is beauty still live?
And can we call him *Dad*?

Δ

We drive all night to arrive at dawn.
Home? You said there was something sacred
about delivering pizza.
It was true that food made a difference—
but could the Mercedes really go anywhere
in a trailer park?
Did the car see the signs?

The beauty of me is that I'm very rich.
Do you see where this is going now?
Rich men are beginning their names with real.
Are there any real rich roses? Does a lie
cut holes in the truth or place words in front of it?

The beauty of a rose hangs patiently over a grave
without knowing the wear— the time it took
to grieve.

A day? A year?
It only mattered that we remembered
without words— stretched the hour
with our silence.

One answer is real, the other
is fulfillment of a wish arriving
in your dreams.

The beauty of a car is how the man sees
himself in it. He wants to make something great.
The beauty of a grave relies on the man

and the rose together.

How can a man not read? Does this make him real?

Does the car read for him?

Can a speech cut across the country
without reading signs, or wondering
whether sex is permitted
beneath the words?

Can he be holy
without remembering the day?

Is a man beautiful if he cannot see a rose?

Δ

I take the assumption of love
between my fingers more easily
on the floor next to the bed
where I can't move. I know it's you.

There are only signs
when you happen to be nowhere
and the sign teaches you.

The sign is an explanation a rose waits to hear.

One cicada a symphony of springtime....
 how wet nights dragged our salty feet out of winters;
 how we can assume love
with a sign
 which is not a word
I am waiting to hear.

 How sacred could crows feet be?
 There are only signs when you are waiting
to believe in the assumption of a ghost's
love and god. How spring
 is only beautiful when there is enough (time to die)
 and you are in love with a fallen elm
 and there is time enough to live again.

In reverence of signs I attempt to remember
 dreams of greenery and glass veils. I know
 one of the signs is my word.
 I know it's you.
I know if I push the car far enough
 I will find you in a hole called the Grand Canyon.
I want to forget the assumption of love and stretch my voice
 over you— I do not know the word—
 I know it's you—
I do not know the word...

Δ

Were you my first love?

Nights side

by side

and kisses... stubble...

There is no negation— only compromise.

Dry willingness to take up

the residuum of a name

which can no longer be used.

You are still so real to me,

no hole large enough—

no compensation for truth

dangling at this hour. Real

to me so that I love you more; interpret

more signs which I ever ignored.

Waving goodbye and crow footed

smiles which said to me,

You are beautiful.

A rose is a gesture of thought occurring

without a body. Without yours

I risk lilacs or tulips.

Can I interpret signs of an imaginary man without fooling myself?

The absence of a man is a hole

cut out from the world. Do we call this

a temple?

Δ

The beauty of silence is how the man sees
himself in it.

He might as well be
dead (or dreaming).

We park behind an abandoned farm where
there are no signs.

The leather seats are not helping. He takes a photo
of the car while I lie naked on its hood.

The photo could be a sign without a word—
is the beauty of me that I am not a car or
not a man?

Or not abandoned?
Did anyone still read poetry?

I have seen a rose without petals being no less
a rose. With one arm I am held
by him & with the other
I am holiness— the loveliness
of holes dug for him.

Are you a hole? I gasped.

I wonder
will he keep the photograph
when I am dead.

I wonder if he will
at all.

Δ

AFTERWORD

A Hole Cut Out from the World contains a voice of grief which is heard everyday. It is a mourning of small losses— a lost earring, a lost belief, a lost friend. Each day and each poem discovers grief transformed by new words and images. My experience with grief changes constantly and burrows deep, however there are few words to represent this weight. By looking inside the hole, I hope to shed light on something so unspeakable and illegible.

My poetry has become a space for pondering these emotions and thoughts as it seems something worth thinking about linguistically. My studies of literature and especially Freud led me to consider this connection between words and objects (or lack of objects). A word itself is a tool used to express something, but how does this tool work when the letters are forgotten? Or when its meaning gets lost? Grief creates a timespace where the associations and emotions behind a name or a word must be consoled and then rearranged. It requires an undertaking of language that alters its shape, even its sound. When a loved one dies, the world is different. It shrinks, it is missing something precious which used to hold it up. Only an understanding of the world's representation and some kind of continued expression of that missing piece will save it from fading into nothing.

In May of 2015, my father passed away after suffering from dementia and multiple strokes. His name was Charles, but everyone called him Chip. He had the same haircut for 60 years, he loved life, and laughed with everyone he knew. I was lucky enough to care for him while his memory failed, and to hold his hand while he took his last breath, but by the end the world had become an unintelligible place for me. For years I had watched him fade away and while relieved that he would not have to suffer any longer, I was immensely angry. How could one of the people I cared most about disappear, when I was only now understanding what I was to do with my life and with words? Grief demanded an emotional wrestling, as well as a

constant reminder of a physical absence— a wrestling occurring outside of myself which could not be altered. My sister and I laid in bunkbeds marveling at the life we still had left, the years ahead and all with someone missing dearly. Every night I would stare into the hole in my mind— it was a hole of silence following the sound of *dad*, a hole defacing every image of childhood. For a long time I did not see past the hole. Only in dreams did I begin to see stardust in it. My dad was gone, but he never seemed to leave the doorway where he used to lean and warn me of missing the bus again. He appeared in dreams, where I would protect him from aliens, take walks together, and he would ask how everyone was getting on. And what were these dreams but poems, poems where words have the power to conjure something which has no body of its own, something which could not exist in reality. There were delicate phrases and tiny pictures able to make a dead man's face recognizable again. The dream fragments became poems and the hole I looked into was less dark, something floated there which was not loneliness and not anger.

The dreams themselves were unreliable and unremembered, but they were able to reshape the world into something intelligible again. Subtleties and word play inspired me to continue using dreams as the base for my poems. The unconscious had a careful way of moving letters and meanings that could take years to uncover, especially when considering repetition. The same grief, the same word, the same name would appear again and again, yet one knew somehow that none of the iterations were the same, and the echo was not the original sound but a new one. The dreams and language were not simply tools for humans to organize the world— one had to think to use them, had to interpret in order to understand. The idea that there was latent material waiting to be addressed opened up a whole world for me and helped in eradicating the feeling that everything was simply waiting to be lost. The words were signs waiting to be found, and this included not only phrases surrounding dead loved ones, but unspoken political views and many other moments of interaction with the world.

I'd like to thank many people for supporting me in the past year and throughout my time at Bard. For my family (especially my mom) who are there for me at all times. For my friends and my roommates who put up with me and brought about many laughs. For Sam—thank you for being you & supporting me through my roughest moments. For professors who have taught me an incredible amount over the years. Thank you Ann! Working with you this year has been such a joy and I will miss our wandering conversations next year. I'd also like to thank protesters and people around the world who choose not to accept reality as it is given to them. Remember the temple! Keep it sharp!